

Every Child Learning Every Day



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READY TO LEARN

Routines return in September

By Dr. Stan Steiner

September brings the end of summer and a return to many routines. These books highlight some every day activities for preschoolers and their families.

"Dad Aren't You Glad?," by Lynn Plourde and illustrated by Amy Wummer. 2005. Dutton. As any parent knows, youngsters like to help out with the tasks around the house. Of course they have unique ways of doing these chores. This book will help audiences see the fun side of helping hands.

"The Going to Bed Book," by Sandra Boynton. 1982/2000, Little Simon. Pre K. Boynton's familiar whimsical characters are as entertaining today as they were for past generations.

"Search and Learn, My First Things That Go," by Lisa Haughom, Kidsbook, 2004. This book is full of fun transportation illustrations. It sweeps the children off to places where everything is on the move, developing their curiosity and vocabulary along the way. An ideal book for parent-child read together time. A cast of lovable animal characters display each on the go activity.

"Doors," by Roxie, Munro-Chronicle Books, 2004. Doors hold a fascination for the young at heart from the time they are mobile until they move through adulthood. This cool pop-up book provides over 50 doors to open and search for a host of objects.

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Take time to share your views on child care

Dear Reader:

I hope that sometime during September you will take time to take a short web-based survey about early child care issues in Idaho.

The survey is sponsored by the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (You can read more about how to participate in the survey on the back page.)

The association wants to know what Idaho parents who use child care services think about some key issues.

The survey is short with a little over 30 intriguing questions.

You'll be asked to rate the importance of staff-to-child ratios, qualifications of staff who work with young children,



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qualify of facilities, and other issues related to child care.

You also will be asked for your opinions on whether child care providers should be trained in CPR, First Aid, meeting the needs of special needs chil-

dren, and nutrition.

IAEYC hopes to get a sufficient sampling of Idaho parents to provide some information to policy makers about what parents expect and want from their child care providers.

Monitoring and regulation of child care in Idaho is fractured among many groups and can vary from community to community.

The State Department of Education plays a role through programs that participate in U.S. Department of Agriculture programs.

So as one of the agencies involved in working with child care providers and parents, I am looking forward to hearing about the results.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Use music activity to work on balance skills

Physical Education (P.E.) Central is a website (www.pecentral.org) where educators share lessons plans for activities aimed for different age groups. The website presents a large number of Preschool lesson ideas for you to use.

Name of activity — Musical Line Movements

Purpose of activity — To work on balance by traveling along lines on the floor; and by starting and stopping a variety of locomotor movements with control.

Materials needed — Upbeat music, boom box, lines to move on. You can make lines with chalk on the driveway if you don't have open indoor space.

Description of activity — Children find a spot on any line on the gym floor. Then instruct them to "freeze." Start the music. The children walk forward, following lines on the floor. Stop the music. The children freeze like statues" as they freeze without moving. As the activity continues, challenge students to travel on the

lines using different locomotor skills.

Variations — Challenge students to travel in different directions along the lines. Use music with different tempos and ask students to match that speed.

Assessment ideas — Note the students who lose their balance or are unable to stop with control when the music stops.

Watch for correct execution of fundamental locomotor skills.



RESOURCES

Take child care survey by Sept. 30

The Idaho Association of Young Children (IAEYC) is surveying parents of preschoolers about their opinion on early childhood care services in the state.

The statewide Child Care Survey is web-based and takes about 8 to 10 minutes to complete and must be completed by Sept. 30.

The link to take this survey is: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=388081234858>

Karen Mason of IAEYC said the survey results would be useful in informing state policy makers in January.

"This will be a strong tool to take to our legislators to show them what people in Idaho want or don't want in relation to statewide regulation to protect and nurture our children," Mason said.

Parents are asked to complete the survey only once and to encourage other parents of preschoolers to complete the survey.

Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children is the Idaho affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

IAEYC supports quality early care and education for all children from birth through age eight and promotes excellence in early childhood education.

IAEYC supports families by managing the annual renewal process for Idaho Child Care Program providers and by providing referrals to families seeking care.

IAEYC supports members throughout the state and works with a variety of partners to more effectively serve Idaho's young children and their families. IAEYC supports the professional development of child care providers through seven regional offices and through IdahoSTARS, a four-part professional development system for Idaho's child care professionals. IAEYC's website is: <http://www.idahoaeYC.org>

NUTRITION

Families encouraged to eat smart, play hard

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is challenging parents and other adults to "make a difference" in a child's life by sitting down to dinner with your children, or participating in new physical activity, or having a family get together where all the family helps to prepare the meal.

Eat Smart. Play Hard, is the new voice of the USDA when it comes to how parents should be



influencing their children's eating and activity behaviors. By following this simple but effective tool to model behavior your young children will learn from you smart eating habits that include choosing a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, enjoying milk and other dairy products, and adding more whole-grains to your diet.

When you Play Hard your children learn to enjoy the simple pleasures of exercise and physical activity and how beneficial these activities are for their bodies. Running, jumping, climbing or playing baseball

with your young children can be fun for them and you!

Gather your family together at least one night a week for dinner. Give each family member a chore: setting the table, folding napkins, or helping to make the salad can be fun for young children. Bringing the family together to enjoy a meal and share their day's stories can be fun for the whole family.

They may complain at first, but if you stick with it before long the family members will be looking forward to these times of family sharing, meal preparation and eating.

SMART STARTS

Help children feel confident away from you

In order to succeed at school, a child must feel comfortable and safe while away from the primary caregiver. Children who are confident and secure away from their parents are more apt to socialize, interact with the teacher, and learn more quickly while at school.

You can help your child feel confident and safe with other adults, so that he or she is more comfortable on the first day of school.

Birth to 1 year — Allow your baby to spend short amounts of time with a trusted individual with whom your baby feels safe. This could be as short as leaving the room, and then returning in a few minutes. If one parent works away from the home, be sure to say goodbye each morning, and tell baby that they will return that evening, so that baby learns that they will return.

1 to 3 years — Schedule play time with other children. Your

child will learn to play with other children, and to share your attention with them. You can arrange to meet friends at the park, have play dates.

3 to 5 years — Arrange play dates for your child. Rotate the location of the play dates, so that at least some of the time, the play dates are away from your home. Reinforce the positive aspects, "Today you get to play with your friends!"

ARTS

Practice eye-hand coordination in the bathtub

The bathtub can be a fun place to develop fine-motor skills. Developmental skills include eye-hand coordination, which is necessary for eating, painting, and eventually, writing. Consider providing practice for these skills while your child is in the tub. You can provide some "toys" like plastic measuring cups and spoons, and even an egg-beater.

Dipping water to fill cups and to pour from one to another is great fun. Creating froth or bubbles can be accomplished with an egg-beater. If you provide a plastic bowl for this, you will have provided additional safety for your child and the soap concentration can be ad-

justed to get satisfactory bubbles.

To save mess, provide practice, and have an evening snack, you can place your child in the tub with a plastic plate, a plastic knife and a watermelon slice without the rind. Show your child how to hold the plate with one hand while using the plastic knife to cut bite-sized pieces from the watermelon. The chunks can be eaten with the fingers or perhaps by spearing them with a plastic fork. At the end, pick up the utensils and supervise the filling of the tub with water for the nightly bath and easy cleanup.

Your child might like to use the tub for other activities that

can be messy for floors and other surfaces. Using watercolors or other paints to paint pictures on the inside of the tub provides an ever-ready canvas and an easy cleanup after the art session. If you like, you can tape pieces of paper to the inside of the tub walls to create art that can be saved — after it has dripped and dried. It is advisable to check to see if the paint is non-staining on porcelain prior to beginning this activity.

Jennifer Williams is a retired art teacher and former Idaho teacher of the Year.